

**SELECT BOARD
MEETING MINUTES-AUGUST 28, 2023**

7:00 p.m. – Selectmen’s Meeting Room, Northborough Town Hall, 63 Main Street, Northborough, MA

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mitch Cohen, Chair
Kristen Wixted, Vice Chair
Laura Ziton, Clerk
Julianne Hirsh
Lisa Maselli

VOTE ON EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT WITH MICHAEL GALLAGHER FOR INTERIM TOWN ADMINISTRATOR SERVICES

Chair Cohen explained that Bob Reed would be leaving and the Board had previously voted to appoint Michael Gallagher as the next interim town administrator. The Board has been provided with a copy of the contract and a vote needs to be taken to approve the contract. Lisa Maselli questioned the length of the contract and Chair Cohen explained that the time was dictated by the charter. Motion was made by Julianne Hirsh to approve the contract for Michael Gallagher, seconded by Kristen Wixted; all members voted in favor.

GOAL SETTING DISCUSSION

Chairman Cohen explained that tonight’s meeting was to begin a discussion of Select Board goals. The object of the meeting is to list all ideas and then at later meetings to refine the list and set a timeline. He mentioned that this is a new exercise for the Board and that after setting the goals there should be review in about a year. This process will take several meetings but tonight’s meeting is to start a discussion. Julianne Hirsh then began by stating that in writing down goals she realized that they fell into certain categories. Those categories are: Communication, Finance, Ongoing Projects, and “Things to learn more about.” Laura Ziton added Environmental Stewardship, Economic Development and Housing.

Laura Ziton offered to write the goals as the discussion proceeded.

Lisa Maselli offered a draft of Goals and Objectives that included process, values and guiding principles.

Members of the public who participated were Gib Chase, Henry Squillante, and Ron Ducette.

The list of goals that members offered are as follows in no special order or priority:

COMMUNICATION

- Enhance and improve communication between residents, boards, and staff
- Work towards transparency
- Follow up on projects that are voted on
- Meet new staff
- Streamline communication between administrative staff and the Board
- Town meeting improvements/streamline the process
- Town meeting warrant “show” with the moderator to talk about the articles
- Electronic voting at town meeting
- Monthly town administrator newsletter
- Consider appointing a communications director for important updates and help educate the public about town business

- Board flowchart: help clarify how town business proceeds through various boards and committees
- Annual meeting with representatives from all boards and committees to allow for more communication between committees
- Institute hybrid meetings
- Meetings with department heads annually or more often as necessary
- Address employee retention, use exit interviews
- Guidance for new volunteers- help them onboard to their new role
- Create a vision statement
- Staffing study- review organizational structure
- More detailed budget status prior to town meeting
- Strive to keep taxes at a reasonable growth rate
- Identify liaison positions and responsibilities
- Communication before projects are undertaken- and project completion report and feedback about company or firm that provided service
- Address cellular reception in all parts of town
- Consider using Code Red capability for important town announcements

FINANCE AND BUDGET GOALS

THE OVERARCHING GOAL IS TO PROVIDE A RESPONSIBLE BUDGET WHILE MAINTAINING SERVICES, QUALITY EDUCATION AND AFFORDABILITY

- Public comment at finance and appropriations meetings
- Employ interns to save money
- Work with CMRPC to share equipment or services when possible
- Review tax rate and review pros and cons of a split tax rate
- Research grants, other funding services
- Quarterly finance report
- Legal fee/ administrative budget updates
- Staffing study particularly for finance department
- Auction town properties to get them off the books
- Find out more about tax title taking
- Discuss ARPA funding priorities: what is the one thing that we could spend that money on that would be beneficial to the town? Example would be putting utilities underground in the downtown.
- Look into expanding Senior Center hours
- Review auditor recommendations and institute where appropriate
- Collaboration between department heads during budget discussions
- Create an Economic Development Commission
- Evaluate need for transportation options

MISCELLANEOUS

- Establish list of ongoing projects and get regular updates; building projects including White Cliffs, Town Hall, Fire Station, Peaslee School, Police Station painting project, downtown revitalization, complete streets
- Review executive session minutes
- Address crosswalks in town
- Bike lanes, paths, find out more about multitown bike trail
- Clean up waterways specifically Bartlett Pond and Assabet River
- Include sustainability building goals in all projects whenever possible

- Evaluate hazardous waste licenses
- Teen drop-in center
- Joint meeting with planning board
- Electric car chargers
- Get more information about Green Community status
- Solar panels on municipal buildings if possible
- Tree replacement program
- Form a Northborough Sustainable committee
- Work towards reducing municipal carbon footprint
- Review board policies
- Discuss offering a code of conduct for boards and committees
- Review appointment process
- Review and potentially consolidate committees, form new committees as necessary, deactivate those that have finished their work
- Recruit new volunteers
- Townwide maintenance of roadways and sidewalks
- Sidewalk plan and improvements
- Learn more about ranked choice voting
- Learn more about cyber security
- Enhance, promote and support the town's historical buildings and heritage
- Institute high school government week- encourage student participation in municipal government
- Discuss possibility of allowing 16 year olds to vote in municipal elections
- Community outreach to students

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Cohen commented that this was the first of several meetings and future meetings will refine and prioritize the list of goals that that were generated at tonight's meeting. Motion to adjourn was made by Lisa Maselli and seconded by Laura Ziton. All members voted in favor; meeting was adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Julianne Hirsh
Select Board member

Documents used during the meeting:

1. August 28, 2023 Meeting Agenda
2. Contract for interim Town Administrator
3. Draft of goals and objectives from Lisa Maselli